

# al-Farabi

**Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi** (Arabic: أبو نصر محمد الفارابي, romanized: *Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī*; c. 870<sup>[1][H]</sup> – 14 December 950–12 January 951),<sup>[2]</sup> known in the Latin West as **Alpharabius**,<sup>[3][I]</sup> was an early Islamic philosopher and music theorist.<sup>[4]</sup> He has been designated as "Father of Islamic Neoplatonism",<sup>[5]</sup> and the "Founder of Islamic Political Philosophy".<sup>[6]</sup>



Postage stamp of the USSR, issued on the 1100th anniversary of the birth of Al-Farabi (1975)

Al-Farabi's fields of philosophical interest included—but not limited to, philosophy of society and religion;<sup>[7]</sup> philosophy of Language and Logic;<sup>[8]</sup> psychology and epistemology;<sup>[9]</sup> metaphysics,<sup>[10]</sup> political philosophy,<sup>[11]</sup> and ethics.<sup>[12]</sup> He was an expert in both practical musicianship and music theory,<sup>[13]</sup> and although he was not intrinsically a scientist,<sup>[14]</sup> his works incorporate astronomy,<sup>[15]</sup> mathematics,<sup>[16]</sup> cosmology,<sup>[17]</sup> and physics.<sup>[18]</sup>

Al-Farabi is credited as the first Muslim who presented philosophy as a coherent system in the Islamic world,<sup>[19]</sup> and created a philosophical system of his own,<sup>[20]</sup> which developed a philosophical system that went far beyond the scholastic interests of his Greco-Roman Neoplatonism and Syriac Aristotelian precursors.<sup>[21][J]</sup> That he was more than a pioneer in Islamic philosophy,<sup>[22]</sup> can be deduced from the habit of later writers calling him the "Second Master",<sup>[23][24][C]</sup> with Aristotle as the first.

Al-Farabi's impact on philosophy is undeniable, to name a few, Yahya ibn Adi, Abu Sulayman Sijistani, Abu al-Hassan al-Amiri, and Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi;<sup>[25]</sup> Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra;<sup>[26]</sup> Avempace, Ibn Tufail, and Averroes;<sup>[27]</sup> Maimonides,<sup>[28]</sup> Albertus Magnus,<sup>[29]</sup> and Leo Strauss.<sup>[30]</sup> He was known in the Latin West,<sup>[31]</sup> as well as the Islamic world.


# Biography

The existing variations in the basic accounts of al-Farabi's origins and pedigree indicate that they were not recorded during his lifetime or soon thereafter by anyone with concrete information, but were based on hearsay or guesses (as is the case with other contemporaries of al-Farabi). Little is known about his life. Early sources include an autobiographical passage where al-Farabi traces the history of logic and philosophy up to his time, and brief mentions by [al-Masudi](#), [Ibn al-Nadim](#) and [Ibn Hawqal](#). [Said al-Andalusi](#) wrote a biography of al-Farabi. [Arabic](#) biographers of the 12th–13th centuries thus had few facts to hand, and used invented stories about his life.<sup>[32]</sup>

From incidental accounts it is known that he spent significant time (most of his scholarly life) in [Baghdad](#) with Syriac Christian scholars,<sup>[K]</sup> including the [cleric](#) Yuhanna ibn Haylan, [Yahya ibn Adi](#), and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Baghdadi. He later spent time in [Damascus](#) and in Egypt before returning to Damascus where he died in 950–951.<sup>[33]</sup>

His name was Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Farabi,<sup>[32]</sup> sometimes with the family surname al-Tarkhani, i.e., the element [Tarkhan](#) appears in a [nisba](#).<sup>[32]</sup> His grandfather was not known among his contemporaries, but a name Awzalagh,<sup>[L]</sup> in Arabic, suddenly appears later in the writings of [Ibn Abi Usaybi'a](#), and of his great-grandfather in those of [Ibn Khallikan](#).<sup>[32]</sup>

His birthplace could have been any one of the many places in [Central Asia](#)—then known by

Abu Nasr Farabi	
<div></div> <div>Portrait of Al-Farabi—Alpharabius<sup>[A]</sup></div>	
Born	<div>c. 870</div> <div>Faryab, Khorasan or Farab, Transoxiana<sup>[B]</sup></div>
Died	<div>c. 950</div> <div>Damascus</div>
Other names	Second Master <sup>[C]</sup>
Philosophical work	
Era	Islamic Golden Age
Region	Islamic philosophy
School	Aristotelianism · Neoplatonism
Main interests	Political Philosophy · Philosophy of Religion · Physics · Metaphysics · Logic · Psychology · Epistemology · Ethics · Music Theory
Notable works	<i>Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir</i> ("Grand Book of Music"), <sup>[D]</sup> <i>Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila</i> ("Virtuous City"), <sup>[E]</sup>



the name of [Khurasan](#). The word *farab* is a Persian term for a locale that is irrigated by effluent springs or flows from a nearby river. Thus, there are many places that carry the name (or various evolutions of that toponym) in that general area, such as Farab ([Otrar](#)) on the Jaxartes ([Syr Darya](#)) in modern [Kazakhstan](#); Farab, an still-extant village in suburbs of the city of Chaharjuy/Amul (modern [Türkmenabat](#)) on the Oxus [Amu Darya](#) in [Turkmenistan](#), on the [Silk Road](#), connecting [Merv](#) to [Bukhara](#), or [Faryab](#) in [Greater Khorasan](#) (modern day Afghanistan). The older [Persian](#)<sup>[32]</sup> Parab (in [Hudud ul-'alam](#)) or Faryab (also Paryab), is a common Persian toponym meaning "lands irrigated by diversion of river water".<sup>[34][35]</sup>

	<i>Kitab Ihṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm</i> ("Enumeration of the Sciences"), <sup>[F]</sup> <i>Risalah fi'l-Aql</i> (Epistle on the Intellect) <sup>[G]</sup>
<b>Notable ideas</b>	Father of <a href="#">Islamic Neoplatonism</a> , Founder of <a href="#">Islamic Political Philosophy</a>

## Background



Iranian stamp with al-Farabi's imagined face

While scholars largely agree that his ethnic background is not knowable,<sup>[32][36][37][38]</sup> Al-Farabi has also been described as being of either Persian or Turkic origin. Medieval [Arab](#) historian [Ibn Abi Usaibia](#) (died in 1270)—one of al-Farabi's oldest biographer—mentions in his *Uyun* that al-Farabi's father was of [Persian](#) descent.<sup>[32][39]</sup> [Al-Shahrazuri](#), who lived around 1288 and has written an early biography, also states that al-Farabi hailed from a Persian family.<sup>[40][41]</sup> According to [Majid Fakhry](#), an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at [Georgetown University](#), al-Farabi's father "was an army captain of Persian extraction."<sup>[42]</sup> A Persian origin has been stated by many other sources as well.<sup>[43]</sup> Dimitri Gutas notes that Farabi's works contain references and glosses in [Persian](#), [Sogdian](#), and even [Greek](#), but not Turkish.<sup>[32][44]</sup> [Sogdian](#) has also been suggested as his native language<sup>[45]</sup> and the language of the inhabitants of Farab.<sup>[46]</sup> Muhammad Javad Mashkoor argues for an Iranian-speaking Central Asian origin.<sup>[47]</sup> According to [Christoph Baumer](#), he was

probably a [Sogdian](#).<sup>[48]</sup> According to Thérèse-Anne Druart, writing in 2020, "Scholars have disputed his ethnic origin. Some claimed he was Turkish but more recent research points to him being a Persian."<sup>[49]</sup>



al-Farabi on the currency of the [Republic of Kazakhstan](#)

The oldest known reference to a [Turkic](#) origin is given by the medieval historian [Ibn Khallikan](#) (died in 1282), who in his work *Wafayat* (completed in 669/1271) states that al-Farabi was born in the small village of [Wasij](#) near Farab (in what is today [Otrar, Kazakhstan](#)) of Turkic parents. Based on this account, some scholars say he is of Turkic origin.<sup>[50][51][52][53][54][55]</sup> [Dimitri Gutas](#), an American Arabist, criticizes this, saying that [Ibn Khallikan](#)'s account is aimed at the earlier historical accounts by [Ibn Abi Usaybi'a](#), and serves the purpose to "prove" a Turkic origin for al-Farabi, for instance by mentioning the additional *nisba* (surname) "*al-Turk*" (arab. "the Turk")—a *nisba* al-Farabi never had.<sup>[32]</sup> However, [Abu al-Feda](#), who copied [Ibn Khallekan](#), changed *al-Torkī* to the phrase "*wa-kana rajolan torkiyan*", meaning "he was a Turkish man."<sup>[32]</sup> In this regard, since works of such supposed Turks lack traces of Turkic nomadic culture, [Oxford professor C.E. Bosworth](#) notes that "great figures [such] as Farabi, [Biruni](#), and [Avicenna](#) have been attached by over enthusiastic Turkish scholars to their race".<sup>[56]</sup>

## Life and education

Al-Farabi spent most of his scholarly life in [Baghdad](#). In the autobiographical passage preserved by [Ibn Abi Usaybi'a](#), al-Farabi stated that he had studied logic, medicine and sociology with Yuhanna ibn Haylan up to and including Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, i.e., according to the order of the books studied in the curriculum, al-Farabi was claiming that he had studied [Porphyry's](#) *Eisagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior and Posterior Analytics*. His teacher, Yuhanna bin Haylan, was a [Nestorian](#) cleric. This period of study was probably in Baghdad, where [al-Mas'udi](#) records that Yuhanna died during the reign of [al-Muqtadir](#) (295-320/908-32). In his *Appearance of Philosophy* (*Fī Zuhūr al-Falsafa*), al-Farabi tells us:<sup>[57]</sup>

Philosophy as an academic subject became widespread in the days of the Ptolemaic kings of the Greeks after the death of Aristotle in Alexandria until the end of the woman's reign [i.e., Cleopatra's]. The teaching of it continued unchanged in Alexandria after the death of



Aristotle through the reign of thirteen kings ... Thus it went until the coming of Christianity. Then the teaching came to an end in Rome while it continued in Alexandria until the king of the Christians looked into the matter. The bishops assembled and took counsel together on which parts of [philosophy] teaching were to be left in place and which were to be discontinued. They formed the opinion that the books on logic were to be taught up to the end of the assertoric figures [*Prior Analytics*, I.7] but not what comes after it, since they thought that would harm Christianity. Teaching the rest [of the logical works] remained private until the coming of Islam when the teaching was transferred from Alexandria to Antioch. There it remained for a long time until only one teacher was left. Two men learned from him, and they left, taking the books with them. One of them was from Harran, the other from Marw. As for the man from Marw, two men learned from him..., Ibrahim al-Marwazi and Yuhanna ibn Haylan. [Al-Farabi then says he studied with Yuhanna ibn Haylan up to the end of the *Posterior Analytics*].

He was in Baghdad at least until the end of September 942, as recorded in notes in his *Mabāde' āra' ahl al-madīna al-fāzela*.<sup>[E]</sup> He finished the book in Damascus the following year (331), i.e., by September 943). He also lived and taught for some time in [Aleppo](#). Al-Farabi later visited [Egypt](#), finishing six sections summarizing the book *Mabāde'*,<sup>[M]</sup> in Egypt in 337/July 948 – June 949 when he returned to Syria, where he was supported by [Sayf al-Dawla](#), the [Hamdanid](#) ruler. Al-Mas'udi, writing barely five years after the fact (955-6, the date of the composition of the *Tanbīh*), says that al-Farabi died in [Damascus](#) in Rajab 339 (between 14 December 950 and 12 January 951).<sup>[32]</sup>

## Religious beliefs

Al-Farabi's religious affiliation within Islam is disputed. While some historians identify him as [Sunni](#),<sup>[58]</sup> some others assert he was [Shia](#) or influenced by Shia. Fauzi Najjar argues that al-Farabi's political philosophy was influenced by Shiite sects.<sup>[59]</sup> Giving a positive account, [Nadia Maftouni](#) describes Shi'ite aspects of al-Farabi's writings. As she put it, al-Farabi in his *al-Millāh*, *al-Siyasah al-Madaniyah*, and *Tahsil al-Sa'adah* believes in a utopia governed by Prophet and his successors: the Imams.<sup>[60]</sup>

# Works and contributions

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Al-Farabi made contributions to the fields of [logic](#), [mathematics](#), [music](#), [philosophy](#), [psychology](#), and [education](#).

## Alchemy

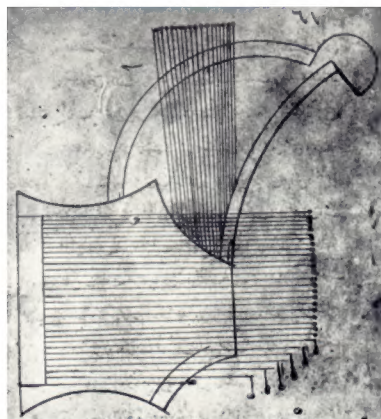
Al-Farabi wrote: *The Necessity of the Art of the Elixir*.<sup>[61][N]</sup>

## Logic

Though he was mainly an Aristotelian logician, he included a number of non-Aristotelian elements in his works. He discussed the topics of [future contingents](#), the [number](#) and relation of the categories, the relation between [logic](#) and [grammar](#), and non-Aristotelian forms of [inference](#).<sup>[62]</sup> He is also credited with categorizing logic into two separate groups, the first being "idea" and the second being "[proof](#)".

Al-Farabi also considered the theories of [conditional syllogisms](#) and [analogical inference](#), which were part of the [Stoic](#) tradition of logic rather than the Aristotelian.<sup>[63]</sup> Another addition al-Farabi made to the Aristotelian tradition was his introduction of the concept of "poetic [syllogism](#)" in a commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*.<sup>[64]</sup>

## Music



Drawing of a musical instrument, a *shahrud*, from al-Farabi's *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir*.<sup>[D]</sup>

Al-Farabi wrote a book on [music](#) titled *Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir* (Grand Book of Music).<sup>[65][D]</sup> In it, he presents philosophical principles about music, its cosmic qualities, and its influences, and discusses the [therapeutic](#) effects of [music](#) on the [soul](#).<sup>[66]</sup> He moreover talks about its impact on

speech, clarifying how actually to fit music to speech, i.e., poetry, in arrange to upgrade the meaning of a text.<sup>[67]</sup>

## Philosophy



Gerard of Cremona's Latin translation of *Kitab ihsa' al-'ulum* ("Enumeration of the Sciences")<sup>[F]</sup>

As a philosopher, al-Farabi was a founder of his own school of [early Islamic philosophy](#) known as "Farabism" or "Alfarabism", though it was later overshadowed by [Avicennism](#). Al-Farabi's school of philosophy "breaks with the philosophy of [Plato](#) and [Aristotle](#) [... and ...] moves from [metaphysics](#) to [methodology](#), a move that anticipates [modernity](#)", and "at the level of philosophy, Farabi unites theory and practice [... and] in the sphere of the [political](#) he liberates practice from theory". His [Neoplatonic](#) theology is also more than just metaphysics as rhetoric. In his attempt to think through the nature of a [First Cause](#), Farabi discovers the limits of human [knowledge](#)".<sup>[68]</sup>

Al-Farabi had great influence on science and philosophy for several centuries,<sup>[69]</sup> and was widely considered second only to Aristotle in knowledge (alluded to by his title of the "Second Teacher"),<sup>[C]</sup> in his time. His work, aimed at synthesis of philosophy and [Sufism](#), paved the way for the work of [Avicenna](#).<sup>[70]</sup>

Al-Farabi also wrote a commentary on [Aristotle](#)'s work, and one of his most notable works is *Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila*,<sup>[E]</sup> where he theorized an ideal [state](#), supposedly modelled on Plato's *The Republic*.<sup>[71]</sup> Al-Farabi argued that religion rendered truth through symbols and persuasion, and, like [Plato](#), saw it as the duty of the philosopher to provide guidance to the state. Al-Farabi incorporated the [Platonic](#) view, drawing a parallel from within the Islamic context, in that he regarded the ideal state to be ruled by the [Prophet-Imam](#), instead of the philosopher-king envisaged by Plato. Al-Farabi argued that the ideal state was the city-state of [Medina](#) when it was governed by [Muhammad](#) as its [head of state](#), as he was in direct communion with [Allah](#) whose



law was revealed to him. In the absence of the Prophet-Imam, al-Farabi considered democracy as the closest to the ideal state, regarding the order of the Sunni [Rashidun Caliphate](#) as an example of such a republican order within early Muslim history. However, he also maintained that it was from democracy that imperfect states emerged, noting how the order of the early Islamic Caliphate of the [Rashidun caliphs](#), which he viewed as republican, was later replaced by a form of government resembling a monarchy under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.<sup>[72]</sup>

## Physics

Al-Farabi wrote a short treatise "On Vacuum", where he thought about the nature of the existence of [void](#).<sup>[73]</sup> His final conclusion was that air's volume can expand to fill available space, and he suggested that the concept of [perfect vacuum](#) was incoherent.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Psychology

In his *Opinions of the People of the Ideal City*,<sup>[E]</sup> al-Farabi expressed that a separated person may not accomplish all the idealizations by himself, without the help of other people. It is the intrinsic mien of each man to connect to another human being or to other men within the labor he has to perform. Consequently, to realize what he can of that flawlessness, each man must remain within the neighborhood of others and relate with them.<sup>[66]</sup> In chapter 24 of aforementioned text —*On the Cause of Dreams*— he distinguished between [dream interpretation](#) and the nature and causes of [dreams](#).<sup>[66]</sup>

## Influences and transmission



Pages from a 17th-century manuscript of al-Farabi's commentary on [Aristotle's metaphysics](#)



The main influence on al-Farabi's philosophy was the [Aristotelian](#) tradition of Alexandria. A prolific writer, he is credited with over one hundred works.<sup>[74]</sup> Amongst these are a number of prolegomena to philosophy, commentaries on important Aristotelian works (such as the [Nicomachean Ethics](#)) as well as his own works. His ideas are marked by their coherency, despite drawing together of many different philosophical disciplines and traditions. Some other significant influences on his work were the planetary model of [Ptolemy](#) and elements of [Neo-Platonism](#),<sup>[75]</sup> particularly metaphysics and practical (or political) philosophy—which bears more resemblance to Plato's *Republic* than Aristotle's *Politics*.<sup>[76]</sup>

Al-Farabi played an essential part in the handing down of Aristotle's thought to the Christian West during the Middle Ages, as appears in the translation of al-Farabi's *Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's de Interpretatione* that F. W. Zimmermann published in 1981. Al-Farabi had a great influence on [Maimonides](#), the most important Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages. Maimonides wrote the celebrated [Treatise on Logic](#) in Arabic. The work treats of the essentials of Aristotelian logic in the light of comments made by [Avicenna](#) and al-Farabi; [Rémi Brague](#) emphasises the fact that al-Farabi is the only philosopher mentioned by name within the text.

Al-Farabi, as well as Avicenna and [Averroes](#), have been recognized as [Peripatetics](#) (*al-Mashsha'iyyun*) or [rationalists](#) (*Estedlaliun*) among Muslims.<sup>[77][78][79]</sup> However, he tried to gather together the ideas of [Plato](#) and [Aristotle](#) in his book *Harmonization of the Opinion of the Two Sage*.<sup>[80][0]</sup>

According to Reisman, his work was singularly directed towards the goal of simultaneously reviving and reinventing the Alexandrian philosophical tradition, to which his Christian teacher, Yuhanna ibn Haylan belonged.<sup>[81]</sup> His success should be measured by the honorific title of the "Second Master" of philosophy,<sup>[C]</sup> Aristotle being the first, by which he was known.<sup>[82][83]</sup> Reisman also says that he does not make any reference to the ideas of either [al-Kindi](#) or his contemporary, [Rhazes](#), which clearly indicates that he did not consider their approach to philosophy as a correct or viable one.<sup>[81]</sup>

## Thought

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### Metaphysics and cosmology

In contrast to [al-Kindi](#), who considered the subject of metaphysics to be God, al-Farabi believed that it was concerned primarily with being *qua* being (that is, being in and of itself), and this is related to God only to the extent that God is a principle of absolute being. Al-Kindi's view was, however, a common misconception regarding Greek philosophy amongst Muslim intellectuals at the time, and it was for this reason that [Avicenna](#) remarked that he did not understand Aristotle's *Metaphysics* properly until he had read a prolegomenon written by al-Farabi.<sup>[84]</sup>

Al-Farabi's cosmology is essentially based upon three pillars: Aristotelian metaphysics of causation, highly developed [Plotinian emanational cosmology](#) and the Ptolemaic astronomy.<sup>[85]</sup> In his model, the universe is viewed as a number of concentric circles; the outermost sphere or "first heaven", the sphere of fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and finally, the Moon. At the centre of these concentric circles is the sub-lunar realm which contains the material world.<sup>[86]</sup> Each of these circles represent the domain of the secondary intelligences (symbolized by the celestial bodies themselves), which act as causal intermediaries between the First Cause (in this case, God) and the material world. Furthermore these are said to have emanated from God, who is both their formal and efficient cause.

The process of emanation begins (metaphysically, not temporally) with the First Cause, whose principal activity is self-contemplation. And it is this intellectual activity that underlies its role in the creation of the universe. The First Cause, by thinking of itself, "overflows" and the incorporeal entity of the second intellect "emanates" from it. Like its predecessor, the second intellect also thinks about itself, and thereby brings its celestial sphere (in this case, the sphere of fixed stars) into being, but in addition to this it must also contemplate upon the First Cause, and this causes the "emanation" of the next intellect. The cascade of emanation continues until it reaches the tenth intellect, beneath which is the material world. And as each intellect must contemplate both itself and an increasing number of predecessors, each succeeding level of existence becomes more and more complex. This process is based upon necessity as opposed to will. In other words, God does not have a choice whether or not to create the universe, but by virtue of His own existence, He causes it to be. This view also suggests that the universe is eternal, and both of these points were criticized by [al-Ghazzali](#) in his attack on the philosophers.<sup>[87]</sup>

In his discussion of the First Cause (or God), al-Farabi relies heavily on [negative theology](#). He says that it cannot be known by intellectual means, such as dialectical division or definition, because the terms used in these processes to define a thing constitute its substance. Therefore if one was to define the First Cause, each of the terms used would actually constitute a *part* of its substance and therefore behave as a *cause* for its existence, which is impossible as the First Cause is uncaused; it exists without being caused. Equally, he says it cannot be known according to genus and differentia, as its substance and existence are different from all others, and therefore it has no category to which it belongs. If this were the case, then it would not be the First Cause, because something would be prior in existence to it, which is also impossible. This would suggest that the more philosophically simple a thing is, the more perfect it is. And based on this observation, Reisman says it is possible to see the entire hierarchy of al-Farabi's cosmology according to classification into genus and species. Each succeeding level in this structure has as its principal qualities multiplicity and deficiency, and it is this ever-increasing complexity that typifies the material world.<sup>[88]</sup>



## Epistemology and eschatology

Human beings are unique in al-Farabi's vision of the universe because they stand between two worlds: the "higher", immaterial world of the celestial intellects and universal intelligibles, and the "lower", material world of generation and decay; they inhabit a physical body, and so belong to the "lower" world, but they also have a rational capacity, which connects them to the "higher" realm. Each level of existence in al-Farabi's cosmology is characterized by its movement towards perfection, which is to become like the First Cause, i.e. a perfect intellect. Human perfection (or "happiness"), then, is equated with constant intellection and contemplation.<sup>[89]</sup>

Al-Farabi divides intellect into four categories: potential, actual, acquired and the Agent. The first three are the different states of the human intellect and the fourth is the [Tenth Intellect](#) (the moon) in his emanational cosmology. The potential intellect represents the capacity to think, which is shared by all human beings, and the actual intellect is an intellect engaged in the act of thinking. By thinking, al-Farabi means abstracting universal intelligibles from the sensory forms of objects which have been apprehended and retained in the individual's imagination.<sup>[90]</sup>

This motion from potentiality to actuality requires the Agent Intellect to act upon the retained sensory forms; just as the Sun illuminates the physical world to allow us to see, the Agent Intellect illuminates the world of intelligibles to allow us to think.<sup>[91]</sup> This illumination removes all accident (such as time, place, quality) and physicality from them, converting them into primary intelligibles, which are logical principles such as "the whole is greater than the part". The human intellect, by its act of intellection, passes from potentiality to actuality, and as it gradually comprehends these intelligibles, it is identified with them (as according to Aristotle, by knowing something, the intellect becomes like it).<sup>[92]</sup> Because the Agent Intellect knows all of the intelligibles, this means that when the human intellect knows all of them, it becomes associated with the Agent Intellect's perfection and is known as the acquired Intellect.<sup>[93]</sup>

While this process seems mechanical, leaving little room for human choice or volition, Reisman says that al-Farabi is committed to human voluntarism.<sup>[92]</sup> This takes place when man, based on the knowledge he has acquired, decides whether to direct himself towards virtuous or unvirtuous activities, and thereby decides whether or not to seek true happiness. And it is by choosing what is ethical and contemplating about what constitutes the nature of ethics, that the actual intellect can become "like" the active intellect, thereby attaining perfection. It is only by this process that a human soul may survive death, and live on in the afterlife.<sup>[94]</sup>

According to al-Farabi, the afterlife is not the personal experience commonly conceived of by religious traditions such as [Islam](#) and [Christianity](#). Any individual or distinguishing features of the soul are annihilated after the death of the body; only the rational faculty survives (and then, only if it has attained perfection), which becomes one with all other rational souls within the agent intellect and enters a realm of pure intelligence.<sup>[93]</sup> [Henry Corbin](#) compares this eschatology with

that of the Ismaili Neo-Platonists, for whom this process initiated the next grand cycle of the universe.<sup>[95]</sup> However, [Deborah Black](#) mentions we have cause to be skeptical as to whether this was the mature and developed view of al-Farabi, as later thinkers such as [Ibn Tufayl](#), [Averroes](#) and [Avempace](#) would assert that he repudiated this view in his commentary on the [Nicomachean Ethics](#), which has been lost to modern experts.<sup>[93]</sup>

## Psychology, the soul and prophetic knowledge

In his treatment of the human soul, al-Farabi draws on a basic Aristotelian outline, which is informed by the commentaries of later Greek thinkers. He says it is composed of four faculties: The *appetitive* (the desire for, or aversion to an object of sense), the *sensitive* (the perception by the senses of corporeal substances), the *imaginative* (the faculty which retains images of sensible objects after they have been perceived, and then separates and combines them for a number of ends), and the *rational*, which is the faculty of intellection.<sup>[96]</sup> It is the last of these which is unique to human beings and distinguishes them from plants and animals. It is also the only part of the soul to survive the death of the body. Noticeably absent from these scheme are internal senses, such as common sense, which would be discussed by later philosophers such as [Avicenna](#) and [Averroes](#).<sup>[97]</sup>

Special attention must be given to al-Farabi's treatment of the soul's *imaginative* faculty, which is essential to his interpretation of prophethood and prophetic knowledge. In addition to its ability to retain and manipulate sensible images of objects, he gives the imagination the function of imitation. By this he means the capacity to represent an object with an image other than its own. In other words, to imitate "x" is to imagine "x" by associating it with sensible qualities that do not describe its own appearance. This extends the representative ability of the imagination beyond sensible forms and to include temperaments, emotions, desires and even immaterial intelligibles or abstract universals, as happens when, for example, one associates "evil" with "darkness".<sup>[98]</sup> The Prophet, in addition to his own intellectual capacity, has a very strong imaginative faculty, which allows him to receive an overflow of intelligibles from the agent intellect (the tenth intellect in the emanational cosmology). These intelligibles are then associated with symbols and images, which allow him to communicate abstract truths in a way that can be understood by ordinary people. Therefore what makes prophetic knowledge unique is not its content, which is also accessible to philosophers through demonstration and intellection, but rather the form that it is given by the prophet's imagination.<sup>[99]</sup>

## Practical philosophy (ethics and politics)

The practical application of philosophy was a major concern expressed by al-Farabi in many of his works, and while the majority of his philosophical output has been influenced by Aristotelian



thought, his practical philosophy was unmistakably based on that of [Plato](#).<sup>[100]</sup> In a similar manner to [Plato's Republic](#), al-Farabi emphasized that philosophy was both a theoretical and practical discipline; labeling those philosophers who do not apply their erudition to practical pursuits as "futile philosophers". The ideal society, he wrote, is one directed towards the realization of "true happiness" (which can be taken to mean philosophical enlightenment) and as such, the ideal philosopher must hone all the necessary arts of rhetoric and poetics to communicate abstract truths to the ordinary people, as well as having achieved enlightenment himself.<sup>[101]</sup> Al-Farabi compared the philosopher's role in relation to society with a physician in relation to the body; the body's health is affected by the "balance of its [humours](#)" just as the city is determined by the moral habits of its people. The philosopher's duty, he wrote, was to establish a "virtuous" society by healing the souls of the people, establishing justice and guiding them towards "true happiness".<sup>[102]</sup>

Of course, al-Farabi realized that such a society was rare and required a very specific set of historical circumstances to be realized, which means very few societies could ever attain this goal. He divided those "vicious" societies, which have fallen short of the ideal "virtuous" society, into three categories: ignorant, wicked and errant. *Ignorant* societies have, for whatever reason, failed to comprehend the purpose of human existence, and have supplanted the pursuit of happiness for another (inferior) goal, whether this be wealth, sensual gratification or power. Al-Farabi mentions "weeds" in the virtuous society: those people who try to undermine its progress towards the true human end.<sup>[103]</sup> The best known Arabic source for al-Farabi's political philosophy is his work titled, *Ara Ahl al-Madina al-fadila*.<sup>[E]</sup>

Although some consider al-Farabi to be a political idealism,<sup>[104]</sup> Whether or not al-Farabi actually intended to outline a political programme in his writings remains a matter of dispute amongst academics. [Henry Corbin](#), who considers al-Farabi to be a crypto-[Shi'ite](#), says that his ideas should be understood as a "prophetic philosophy" instead of being interpreted politically.<sup>[105]</sup> On the other hand, [Charles Butterworth](#) contends that nowhere in his work does al-Farabi speak of a prophet-legislator or revelation (even the word philosophy is scarcely mentioned), and the main discussion that takes place concerns the positions of "king" and "statesmen".<sup>[106]</sup> Occupying a middle position is David Reisman, who, like Corbin, believes that al-Farabi did not want to expound a political doctrine (although he does not go so far to attribute it to Islamic Gnosticism either). He argues that al-Farabi was using different types of society as examples, in the context of an ethical discussion, to show what effect correct or incorrect thinking could have.<sup>[107]</sup> Lastly, [Joshua Parens](#) argues that al-Farabi was slyly asserting that a [pan-Islamic](#) society could not be made, by using reason to show how many conditions (such as moral and deliberative virtue) would have to be met, thus leading the reader to conclude that humans are not fit for such a society.<sup>[108]</sup> Some other authors such as [Mykhaylo Yakubovych](#) argue that for al-Farabi, religion (*milla*) and philosophy (*falsafa*) constituted the same praxeological value (i.e. basis for *amal al-fadhil*—"virtuous deed"), while its epistemological level (*ilm*—"knowledge") was different.<sup>[109]</sup>

## Modern Western translations

### English

- *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De interpretatione*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- *Short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963.
- *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- *Alfarabi, The Political Writings. Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- *Alfarabi, The Political Writings, Volume II. "Political Regime" and "Summary of Plato's Laws*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015.
- *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, translated and with an introduction by [Muhsin Mahdi](#), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- *Fusul al-Madani: Aphorisms of the Statesman* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- "Al-Farabi's Long Commentary on Aristotle's Categoriae in Hebrew and Arabic", In *Studies in Arabic and Islamic Culture*, Vol. II, edited by Abrahamov, Binyamin. Ramat: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006.
- Texts translated by D. M. Dunlop:
  - "The Existence and Definition of Philosophy. From an Arabic text ascribed to al-Farabi", *Iraq*, 1951, pp. 76–93).
  - "Al-Farabi's Aphorisms of the Statesman", *Iraq*, 1952, pp. 93–117.
  - "Al-Farabi's Introductory Sections on Logic", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1955, pp. 264–282.
  - "Al-Farabi's Eisagoge", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1956, pp. 117–138.
  - "Al-Farabi's Introductory Risalah on Logic", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1956, pp. 224–235.
  - "Al-Farabi's Paraphrase of the Categories of Aristotle [Part 1]", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1957, pp. 168–197.
  - "Al-Farabi's Paraphrase of the Categories of Aristotle [Part 2]", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1959, pp. 21–54.

### French

- *Idées des habitants de la cité vertueuse*. Translated by Karam, J. Chlala, A. Jaussen. 1949.
- *Traité des opinions des habitants de la cité idéale*. Translated by Tahani Sabri. Paris: J. Vrin, 1990.



- *Le Livre du régime politique*, introduction, traduction et commentaire de Philippe Vallat, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012.

## Spanish

- *Catálogo De Las Ciencias*, Madrid: Imp. de Estanislao Maestre, 1932.
- *La ciudad ideal*. Translated by Manuel Alonso. Madrid: Tecnos, 1995.
- "Al-Farabi: Epístola sobre los sentidos del término intelecto", *Revista Española de filosofía medieval*, 2002, pp. 215–223.
- *El camino de la felicidad*, trad. R. Ramón Guerrero, Madrid: Ed. Trotta, 2002
- *Obras filosóficas y políticas*, trad. R. Ramón Guerrero, Madrid: Ed. Trotta, 2008.
- *Las filosofías de Platón y Aristóteles*. Con un Apéndice: *Sumario de las Leyes de Platón. Prólogo y Tratado primero*, traducción, introducción y notas de Rafael Ramón Guerrero, Madrid, Ápeiron Ediciones, 2017.

## Portuguese

- *A cidade excelente*. Translated by Miguel Attie Filho. São Paulo: Attie, 2019.

## German

- *Der Musterstaat*. Translated by Friedrich Dieterici. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1895.

## Legacy

- A large [Kazakh university KazNU](#), bears his name. There is also an Al-Farabi Library on the university grounds.
- Shymkent Pedagogical Institute of Culture named after al-Farabi (1967–1996).
- In many cities of Kazakhstan there are streets named after him.
- Monuments have been erected in the cities of [Alma-Ata](#), [Shymkent](#) and [Turkestan](#).
- In 1975, the 1100th anniversary of al-Farabi's birth was celebrated on a large international scale in Moscow, Alma-Ata and Baghdad.<sup>[110]</sup>
- The [main-belt](#) asteroid [7057 Al-Fārābī](#) was named in his honor.<sup>[111]</sup>
- In November 2021, a monument to al-Farabi was unveiled in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.<sup>[112]</sup>

## See also

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- [List of modern-day Muslim scholars of Islam](#)
  - [List of Muslim scientists](#)
  - [Tenth Intellect](#) in Ismailism

# Citations

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## Footnotes

- A. Artistic impression of Farabi, in the *Liber Chronicarum*, by Hartmann Schedel, finished in 1493 AD. Note that this woodcut is reused throughout the Nuremberg Chronicle, where it also represents Anaxagoras, Isocrates, Boethius and others.
- B. Currently *Faryab* in modern-day Afghanistan, and *Farab*, or *Otrar* in modern-day Kazakhstan → Balland, Daniel (January 24, 2012). Ehsan Yarshater (ed.). "Fāryāb ii. In Modern Times" (<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/faryab>) . *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation. Retrieved 2 March 2023.; Bosworth, C.E. (July 20, 2002). Ehsan Yarshater (ed.). "Otrār" (<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/otrar>) . *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation. Retrieved 2 March 2023..
- C. Farabi's honorific title, the "Second Master" (Arabic: *المُعَلِّم الثاني*, romanized: *al-Mu'allim al-thānī*), is also interpreted as "Second Teacher" → Netton 1994, p. 99.
- D. The Wikipedia entry *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (Arabic: *كتاب الموسيقى الكبير*, romanized: *Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr*), has the *Great Book of Music*; *Grand*, is according to the French translation, by Rodolphe d'Erlanger (*La musique arabe, Tome I-II: Fārābī, Grand Traité de la Musique*), and Madian (*Language-Music Relationships in Fārābī's Grand Book of Music*, PhD. diss., Cornell University, 1992) → Sawa 2012. NB: *Musiqi*, later *Musiqa*, is the Arabic term for music, the correct title of Farabi's book is as aforementioned with Romanization; Touma 1996, p. 10, has *al-Musiqa*, but Western scholarly works all have *al-Musiqi* → Farmer, Henry G. (1913–1936). "Mūsīkī" ([https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X\\_ei1\\_SIM\\_4900](https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_4900)) . In Martijn Theodoor Houtsma; et al. (eds.). *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. III (1st ed.). Leiden: Brill. pp. 749b–755b (esp. p. 751b). doi:10.1163/2214-871X\_ei1\_SIM\_4900 ([https://doi.org/10.1163%2F2214-871X\\_ei1\\_SIM\\_4900](https://doi.org/10.1163%2F2214-871X_ei1_SIM_4900)) . ISBN 90-04-08265-4. ; Neubauer, Eckhard (February 20, 2009). Ehsan Yarshater (ed.). "Music History ii. ca. 650 to 1370 CE" (<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/music-history-ii>) . *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation. Retrieved 15 March 2023.; Wright, Owen (1954–2007) [1992]. "Mūsīkī, later Mūsīkā" ([https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_0812](https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0812)) . In H. A. R. Gibb; et al. (eds.). *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. VII (2nd ed.). Leiden: Brill. pp. 681a–688b (esp. 682b). doi:10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_COM\_0812 ([https://doi.org/10.1163%2F1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_0812](https://doi.org/10.1163%2F1573-3912_islam_COM_0812)) . ISBN 90-04-07026-5. .



- E. *Virtuous City*, has several names in Arabic: 1. (Arabic: آراء أهل المدينة الفاضلة, romanized: *Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*); 2. (Arabic: مبادئ آراء أهل المدينة الفاضلة, romanized: *Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*); 3. (Arabic: آراء أهل المدينة الفاضلة والمضاداتها, romanized: *Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa-l'muḍāddātihā*); last name might appear in Eastern publications. In Western academic works, they as a rule interpret the final two words of the Arabic title (i.e., *al-Madina al-fadila*) into: *Excellent State*, *Ideal State*, *Perfect State*, and *Virtuous City*, the final name is most common. However, some scholars interpret the complete titles into 1. *Opinions of The Citizens of The Virtuous City*; 2. *Principles of the Opinions of the Citizens of the Virtuous City*. Note that synonym(s) might be utilized as well (e.g., *Ideal City*, for *Ideal State*; or *People, Inhabitants*, for *Citizens*, etc.). I have included this tag to distinctive titles used within the article, thus the readers won't get confused.
- F. *Enumeration of the Sciences*, (Arabic: كتاب إحصاء العلوم, romanized: *Kitāb iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*), known in the [Latin West](#) as *De scientiis*, is the established English name of this book → [Druart 2021](#), § 1. Former academic works may refer to it as *Classification of Sciences*; e.g., [Madkour 1963–1966](#), p. 453.
- G. *Epistle on the Intellect*, or *Treatise on the Intellect* (Arabic: رسالة في العقل, romanized: *Risālah fi'l-'aql*), known in the [Latin West](#) as *De intellectu* → [López-Farjeat 2020](#), § 4.
- H. The date of Farabi's birth is unknown → [Gutas 2012a](#), § Life; [Rudolph 2017](#), p. 537; [Vallat 2020](#), p. 551a. [Ibn Khallikan](#) claims that Farabi died at the age of 80, meaning 80 Lunar, i.e., c. 78 Solar years, isn't/aren't any other source(s) to prove or disprove [Ibn Khallikan](#)'s claim? Based on his statement, [Henry Corbin](#), correctly, gives the date of Farabi's birth as c. 872; however, after the publication of the article by [Mahdi & Wright 1970–1980](#), decisively giving c. 870–950, scholars followed suit till today. The date of Farabi's death is more precise.
- I. Alternative names include: *Abunaser*, *Alfarabi*, *Avenassar*, and *Farabi*.
- J. For the Syriac Aristotelian tradition → Watt, John W. (2015). "The Syriac Aristotelian Tradition and the Syro-Arabic Baghdad Philosophers" ([https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004306264\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004306264_003)) . In Damien Janos (ed.). *Ideas in Motion in Baghdad and Beyond: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges between Christians and Muslims in the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries*. Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts. Volume 124. Leiden: Brill. pp. 7–43. doi:10.1163/9789004306264\_003 ([https://doi.org/10.1163%2F9789004306264\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163%2F9789004306264_003)) . ISBN 978-90-04-30602-8. ISSN 0929-2403 (<https://search.worldcat.org/issn/0929-2403>) .
- K. [Syriac Christian](#). Reisman doesn't define which branch of [Eastern Christianity](#) they belonged to. He only states: "This association with Christian scholarly circles in Baghdad links Farabi to the Syriac neo-Aristotelian tradition ..." → [Reisman 2005](#), p. 53.

L. Gutas 2012a, § Stories and Legends:

*In modern Turkish scholarship the pronunciation is given as Uzlug[h] (İA V, p. 451), without any explanation.*

→ Kaya, Mahmut; Alaeddin Jebrini (1995). "Fârâbî: Ebû Nasr Muhammed b. Muhammed b. Tarhan b. Uzluğ el-Fârâbî et-Türkî (ö. 339/950)" (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/farabi#1>) . In Tahsin Yazıcı; et al. (eds.). *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (in Turkish).

- M. Once Farabi finished the *Virtuous City* and inserted the Chapter headings, later, somebody inquired him to include sections, summarizing the Chapters, and this he did in Cairo. These six Sections are referred to as *Summery of the Virtuous City* → Mahdi, Muhsin S. (1990). "Fārābī's Imperfect State" (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/602898>) . *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. CX (4): 691–726 (esp. pp. 720 ff.). doi:10.2307/602898 (<https://doi.org/10.2307%2F602898>) . JSTOR 602898 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/602898>) . S2CID 163394266 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:163394266>) ..
- N. *Epistle on the Necessity of the Art of Alchemy* (Arabic: رسالة في وجوب صناعة الكيمياء, romanized: *Risāla fī Wujūb ṣināʿat al-kimiyāʾ*) → Rudolph 2017, p. 571.
- O. A common abbreviated title of the book (Arabic: الجفغ بين رأيي الحكيمين, romanized: *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn*). Its full title is (Arabic: الجفغ بين رأيي الحكيمين أفلاطون الإلهي وأرسطو طاليس, romanized: *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn aflātūn al-ilāhī wa-aristūṭālīs*), *Harmonization of the Opinions of the Two Sages the Divine Plato and Aristotle*. Attribution of this text to Farabi is currently hotly debated → Druart 2021, § 7.

## References

1. Druart 2021, Intro; Corbin 1993, p. 158; Mahdi & Wright 1970–1980, p. 523a.
2. Gutas 2012a, § Life; Rudolph 2017, pp. 538–539; Vallat 2020, p. 551b.
3. Weber 2017, p. 169a.
4. Druart 2021, Intro; Mahdi & Wright 1970–1980, p. 523a; Streetman 2014, p. 231a.
5. Fakhry 2002, passim; Netton 1998, summary.
6. Butterworth 2015, p. 2a; Daiber 1996, p. 848; Galston 1990, p. 5; Mahdi 2010, passim.
7. Germann, Nadja (Spring 2021). "Farabi's Philosophy of Society and Religion" (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/al-farabi-soc-rel/>) . In Zalta, Edward N. (ed.). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
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12. Fakhry 1994, pp. 78–85.
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14. Madkour 1963–1966, pp. 452–453; Weber 2017, p. 169a.
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18. Druart 2021, § 5.
19. Fakhry 2002, pp. 128 ff.; Gutas 2012b, passim; Reisman 2005, p. 52.
20. Adamson 2016, p. 63; Gutas 2012b; Netton 1992, p. 1; Rudolph 2017, p. 596.
21. Adamson 2016, p. 64; Gutas 2012b; Netton 1994, p. 101.
22. Fakhry 2002, p. vii; Netton 1992, p. 1; Reisman 2005, p. 52.
23. Adamec, Ludwig W. (2009). *Historical Dictionary of Islam*. Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements. No. 95 (2nd ed.). Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. pp. 95–96. ISBN 978-0-8108-6161-9.
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34. Daniel Balland, "Fāryāb (<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/faryab>) " in *Encyclopædia Iranica*. excerpt: "Fāryāb (also Pāryāb), common Persian toponym meaning "lands irrigated by diversion of river water"
35. Dehkhoda Dictionary under "Parab" (<http://www.loghatnaameh.com/dehkhodaworddetail-f1f713a319da41dc97d398057889ff2f-fa.html>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20111003184408/http://www.loghatnaameh.com/dehkhodaworddetail-f1f713a319da41dc97d398057889ff2f-fa.html>) 2011-10-03 at the Wayback Machine excerpt: "پاراب . (إ مرکب ) زراعتی " (translation: "Lands irrigated by diversion of river water, springs and qanats.")
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39. Ebn Abi Osaybea, *Oyun al-anba fi tabaqat at-atebba*, ed. A. Müller, Cairo, 1299/1882. وكان ابوه قائد جيش وهو فارسي المنتسب
40. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Mehdi Aminrazavi. "An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia, Vol. 1: From Zoroaster to Umar Khayyam", I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007. Pg 134: "Ibn Nadim in his *al-Fihrist*, which is the first work to mention Farabi considers him to be of Persian origin, as does Muhammad Shahrazuri in his *Tarikh al-hukama* and Ibn Abi Usaybi'a in his *Tabaqat al-atibba*. In contrast, Ibn Khallikan in his "Wafayat al'ayan considers him to be of Turkish descent. In any case, he was born in Farab in Khurasan of that day around 257/870 in a climate of Persianate culture"
41. Arabic: و كان من سلاله فارس in J. Mashkur, *Farab and Farabi*, Tehran, 1972. See also Dehkhoda Dictionary under the entry *Farabi* for the same exact Arabic quote.

42. [Fakhry 2002](#), p. 157.



43. P.J. King, *"One Hundred Philosophers: the life and work of the world's greatest thinkers"*, chapter *al-Fārābi*, Zebra, 2006. pp 50: "Of Persian stock, al-Farabi (Alfarabius, AbuNaser) was born in Turkestan"

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- Edited by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins. (2003). *From Africa to Zen : an invitation to world philosophy*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. pp. 163. [ISBN 0-7425-1350-5](#) "al-Farabi (870–950), a Persian,"
- Thomas F. Glick. (1995). *From Muslim fortress to Christian castle : social and cultural change in medieval Spain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp. 170. [ISBN 0-7190-3349-7](#) "It was thus that al-Farabi (c. 870–950), a Persian philosopher"
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- Olivier Roy, *"The new Central Asia: the creation of nations"* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=FyE9DAAQBAJ&pg=PA167>) , I.B.Tauris, 2000. 1860642799. pg 167: "Kazakhstan also annexes for the purpose of bank notes Al Farabi (870–950), the Muslim philosopher who was born in the south of present-day Kazakhstan but who presumably spoke Persian, particularly because in that era there were no Kazakhs in the region"
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- Ḥannā Fākhūrī, *Tārīkh al-fīkr al-falsafī 'inda al-'Arab, al-Duqqī, al-Jīzah : al-Sharikah al-Miṣrīyah al-'Ālamīyah lil-Nashr, Lūnjmān, 2002.*
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